

- Trauma System
- EMS for Children
- Stroke System
- Poison Control Network
- Emergency Medical Informatics
  - Statewide Trauma Registry
  - Prehospital Patient Care Reporting
- Durable Do Not Resuscitate

The PPCR program used to document EMS responses and patient care, and submit EMS data to the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) will be undergoing its first major update/change since the summer of 2000. An exact timeline for training and implementation will not be available until a state contract is awarded to a commercial EMS software vendor. OEMS expects to award a contract by the end of winter 2009 and implement the program during 2009 (*this is subject to change and further timelines will be announced as they become known*). To help EMS agencies prepare for the changes, we offer the follow known facts about the upgrade, things agencies that are currently using paper PPCR forms can do to prepare, things agencies that use EMS software vendors can do to prepare, and some definitions used in this and other documents that will help you better understand terminology being used during the upgrade of the program.

### Known Facts About OEMS' Upgrade:

- A new minimum dataset\* will be established (will not be announced until state vendor is chosen)
  - The technical file format\*\* will change to the NHTSA v2 XML format, otherwise known as NEMSIS Compliant
  - The upgraded system will be Web based
  - The basic upgraded system will still be provided at no cost to agencies
  - Electronic Patient Care Reporting (ePCR)\*\*\* will be an option (OEMS will provide ePCR software for free, funding may be available for ePCR hardware)
  - Optional functions may be available at the EMS agency's cost (e.g. billing, certification tracking, maintenance and inventory control)
  - All agencies will have access to their own data that is in the state database through secured internet access. (agencies or jurisdictions that submit data for multiple agencies will not have access to the these agencies data within the state database)
- The current PPCR paper form's style and content will be updated to support the upgraded program

### For agencies that are currently using paper PPCR forms you can:

- Identify person at your agency who is responsible for PPCR data, so they can communicate with outside sources that may submit your data and monitor for updates about the upgrade to the PPCR program (add to bylaws or chain of command as needed)
- Ensure you have a quality personal computer(s) for your agency
- Establish internet access at the station(s) where data will be entered or uploaded to the state database (broadband, DSL or similar high speed internet is highly recommended)

Discuss whether your agency wants to convert to ePCR. Consider whether your agency wants to change to ePCR using the following three "ifs" :

- do we want to use ePCR IF our agency has to pay for ePCR,
- do we want to use ePCR IF State funds are made available to completely pay for ePCR,
- do we want to use ePCR IF State funds are available but only to pay for the original equipment and not for ongoing costs like repairs or replacements to equipment?

- If your agency's data is submitted by someone else (e.g. billing company, jurisdiction, EMS software vendor, or other entity) make sure they will be able to make the needed changes and continue to be able to submit for you in the future. It is each licensed EMS agency's responsibility to remain up to date with submitting PPCR data.

If your billing company, jurisdiction, EMS software vendor, or other entity submits your data using the State provided software (currently PPDR) then they should not have an issue in the future.

### For agencies that use EMS software vendors you can:

- If you are considering purchasing new product or renewing a current contract, protect yourself and assure that the vendor can provide you (in writing) the assurance that they have the ability to meet your State requirement to submit PPCR data and that the costs associated with making changes is clearly identified (unless you plan to submit the data individually).
- If you currently use an EMS software program that is "NEMSIS Gold Compliant Software"\*\*\*\* you should not have significant technical issues with the OEMS upgrade.

- If you currently use an EMS software program that is “NEMSIS Silver Compliant Software”\*\*\*\*\* you may have issues with your software not having Virginia’s minimum dataset and you may be required to have your vendor add the needed data elements or be required to submit data separately using the State provided program.
- If you currently use an EMS software program that is not NEMSIS compliant software you are likely to have significant issues with the technical format and minimum dataset that will be required by OEMS in the near future. Be proactive in preparing for the new program as PPCR data submission is required by Law and EMS regulations.

### Terminology:

**\*Minimum Dataset** – each EMS agency is required to submit the “minimum dataset” as required by OEMS. A dataset is a collection of variables or elements. For example the current Virginia dataset includes, age, sex, FIPS Code, incident times, vital signs, procedures, destination information, etc. Each specific item, such as age, is a variable or a data element. EMS agencies currently submit 61 data elements. The minimum dataset is not optional.

**\*\*File Format** – when data is stored in a file, on a disk, or transferred electronically it is done so in a specific file format. Most commonly seen file formats include .doc for Word documents, xls for Excel files, PDF for Adobe files, JPEG for pictures and logos.

Database file formats commonly used in databases similar to the PPCR database include CSV, Formatted Text, dBase, XML, Sylk, DIF just to name a few. CSV files, or **Comma Separated Values**, are probably the most common because of their ease of use. The current PPCR technical format is Formatted Text (commonly called Space Separated/Delimited Values). The upgraded PPCR program will use XML or **eXtensible Markup Language** format. The reason for changing to XML format in our upgraded program is because XML is specifically used for sharing data between databases and especially across the internet.

What do these formats look like: using the first three data elements from the current PPCR program as an example below are examples of a few file formats.

**Variable 1** – Agency Number (Richmond Ambulance Authority is agency 579)

**Variable 2** – Jurisdiction Incident Number (an incident occurring on 10/01/2008 may have an incident number of 08100101)

**Variable 3** – Incident Location FIPS (Richmond City FIPS Code is 760)

Text Formatted = 005790810010151760

CSV format = 579,08100101,760

XML format = <E02\_01>579</E02\_01>  
<E02\_02>08100101</E02\_02>  
<E08\_12>51760</E08\_12>

**\*\*\*ePCR** – electronic patient care reporting eliminates the need to document EMS responses and patient care on paper forms. ePCR’s provide a computer based format to document EMS responses and patient care.

**\*\*\*\*Gold Compliant** – Gold level NEMSIS compliance indicates the vendor has been tested and proven their ability to generate any of the 400+ data elements listed in the NHTSA version 2 dataset

**\*\*\*\*\*Silver Compliant** - Silver level NEMSIS compliance means the vendor has received certification based only on the data elements requested by a specific state or other entity. To be Silver Compliant the vendors dataset must have the 68 required "National" elements. Typically Silver Compliant vendors will have more data elements based on the state or entity’s requirements. *The Commonwealth of Virginia has never engaged with any vendor to establish Silver Compliance based on the Virginia OEMS dataset! Our new dataset will not be established until we secure a state contract with a Gold Certified vendor!*

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